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General Assembly

Fifty-fourth session

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Thursday, 15 June 2000, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Gurirab ..... (Namibia)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Tribute to the memory of Hafez Al-Assad, President of the Syrian Arab Republic

The President: This afternoon, before we take up the items on our agenda, it is my sad duty to pay tribute to the memory of the late President of the Syrian Arab Republic, His Excellency Mr. Hafez Al-Assad, who passed away on Saturday, 10 June 2000.

President Assad was one of the longest-serving heads of State in the world and a key player in the Middle East peace process. It is my sincere hope that, even with his passing, the negotiating process will move forward, on all the recognized tracks, towards a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the whole of the Middle East.

On behalf of the General Assembly, I request the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to convey our condolences to the Government and the people of the Syrian Arab Republic and to the bereaved family of His Excellency Mr. Hafez Al-Assad.

I invite representatives to stand and observe a minute of silence in tribute to the memory of His Excellency Mr. Hafez Al-Assad.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silence.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Denis Dangue Réwaka, Permanent Representative of Gabon, who will speak on behalf of the African States.

Mr. Dangue Réwaka (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): Since Saturday, 10 June 2000, the Middle East and particularly Syria have been in mourning. They have just lost one their illustrious leaders, President Hafez Al-Assad. The unanimous tribute that has been paid to him throughout the world amply demonstrates how greatly he was appreciated, not only as a man the brutal loss of whom we are mourning today, but above all for his work, to which he unstintingly gave his strength, intelligence, heart and life. The world will remember him as a staunch nationalist and a man capable of compromising. His commitment to defend the interests of the Arab nation, as well as his struggle for peace, security and harmony among the countries of the region, made him an essential interlocutor in the Middle East peace process. We have no doubt — and this is our most ardent wish — that his successor will pursue with the same resolve the dialogue that was happily commenced with a view to facilitating the consolidation of peace in the region.

The African Group, on the behalf of which I have the honour to speak, would like to convey to the bereaved family, the Government and people of Syria its most heartfelt sympathy and condolences.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Makarim Wibisono, Permanent Representative of Indonesia, who will speak on behalf of the Asian States.

Mr. Wibisono (Indonesia): I have the honour to address this meeting in my capacity as the Chairman of the Group of Asian States for June 2000.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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It was with the deepest regret that we learned of the passing of President Hafez Al-Assad of the Syrian Arab Republic, on Saturday, 10 June 2000. President Hafez Al-Assad was a man who for three decades fought to build a strong and proud nation and to help his people fulfil their rightful destiny. We extend our deepest condolences to the Government and people of the Syrian Arab Republic on this tragic loss. We take this opportunity to pay tribute to a great man, who dedicated his life to his country and who at the end of his life left a nation that had earned the respect and admiration of the international community.

We are confident that despite his untimely demise the people of the Syrian Arab Republic will continue to move forward and fulfil President Al-Assad's vision under the leadership of the new President. As the next generation assumes the leadership of Syria, we take comfort that Mr. Hafez Al-Assad rests in peace in his appointed place in paradise. Now we, the Member States of the Asian Group, stand ready to assist the Syrian Arab Republic as it makes this transition and continues on the road to peace, security and development.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ion Botnaru, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Moldova, who will speak on behalf of the Eastern European States.

Mr. Botnaru (Republic of Moldova): We are deeply saddened by the passing, on Saturday, 10 June 2000, of His Excellency Hafez Al-Assad, President of the Syrian Arab Republic. The Middle East lost one of the greatest Arab leaders. History will reflect Mr. Al-Assad's career and accomplishments, the role he played in unifying his country. A statesman dedicated to his country's greatness and to the destiny of the Arab nation, President Hafez Al-Assad has left his mark on history over the course of three decades.

The late President took important steps to finally achieve peace in the Middle East. In recent years, especially since the Madrid Conference, he involved his country actively in the Middle East peace process with the aim of achieving a comprehensive and last peace in the region. We sincerely hope that the people of the Syrian Arab Republic, together with the international community, will rededicate their efforts to achieve a stable peace, for which all of the region's peoples are waiting.

On behalf of the Group of Eastern European States, I would like to extend our sincere sympathy and condolences to the members of the bereaved family and to the Government and the people of Syria. We also extend our condolences to His Excellency Ambassador Wehbe and the other members of the Syrian mission to the United Nations.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Patrick Albert Lewis, Permanent Representative of Antigua and Barbuda, who will speak on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mr. Lewis (Antigua and Barbuda): I wish to offer deep and sincere condolences to the Government and people of the Syrian Arab Republic on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States in regard to the passing of President Hafez Al-Assad, the widely respected President of Syria. It is quite clear to the world at large that President Assad's people held him in deep admiration, and were most knowledgeable of the developments that he brought about in his beloved country. He was a man who never lost the common touch and with whom the channels of communication remained open for the citizens of his homeland.

Hafez Al-Assad was born in 1930, and his interest in public affairs became evident during the Second World War, prior to the French evacuation of Syria. He took part in demonstrations aimed at restoring the independence and sovereignty of Syria, became head of a student committee, Lattaquié Muhafaza, and included in his political activities the struggle for Palestinian independence. He later entered the military academy, and in 1966 was nominated Defence Minister, in addition to his post as commander of the air force. By 1966 also he had played an outstanding role in leading the movement that led to the consolidation of the progressive positions and policies of the Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party. His rise after 1966 was meteoric, and in 1971 he was elected President of the Syrian Arab Republic, and he remained in this post until his untimely passing.

Domestically, he was a devoted husband and a loving father of five children. Under President Hafez Al-Assad, respectability was restored to the region of the Middle East and a significant degree of stability was secured for Lebanon. He was most instrumental in achieving peace in the region under the terms of

Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978). Under President Al-Assad, the Syrian economy not only stabilized but demonstrated significant improvement. The President devoted much attention to education and notable achievements were made in this area.

Those of us who hail from Latin America and the Caribbean are mindful of the contribution of the 12 million individuals of Syrian descent who are citizens of our countries. We are thus knowledgeable of the fact that Hafez Al-Assad urged these descendants not to forget their Syrian origin, while also respecting the laws of the countries in which they lived and giving these countries their allegiance.

On a personal note, my country has at its Ambassador to the Middle East one of these descendants, and this fact gave President Al-Assad pride and joy in the achievements of his people in distant lands. So the countries of my region, which are located in North, Central and South America, and in both the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean, recall the passing of a notable politician and statesman, who made a remarkable contribution during his earthly existence towards the understanding of his region and in endeavouring to secure a just and lasting peace for that region.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. António Monteiro, Permanent Representative of Portugal, who will speak on behalf of the Western European and Other States.

Mr. Monteiro (Portugal): On behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States, I would like to convey to the people and Government of the Syrian Arab Republic sincere condolences on the passing of President Hafez Al-Assad. Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to the family of President Al-Assad. His passing was a loss to the Syrian people, and he was much respected in the Arab world and beyond. Allow me also to express the sincere hope of the Group of Western European and Other States that the commitment to peace that President Al-Assad made will be pursued vigorously, with the aim of achieving the ever more urgent comprehensive and lasting solution to the problems of the Middle East.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Abdallah Baali, Permanent Representative of Algeria, who will speak on behalf of the Arab States.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) *(spoke in Arabic)*: I would have preferred not to find myself in the difficult position of having to pay tribute to such an outstanding personality as His Excellency the late President Hafez Al-Assad. I was called by duty, after my colleagues in the Group of Arab States asked me to speak on their behalf, to pay tribute to a great Arab nationalist leader, the late President Al-Assad.

I am truly speechless, searching for words to express the sadness and consternation of the members of the Arab Group following the calamity that befell our Arab brothers and sisters in Syria. We were shaken by the wrenching news of the death of one of our outstanding Arab leaders — one of the greatest symbols of recent Arab struggles for dignity, pride and prosperity.

The late President Al-Assad was a national leader. He dedicated his life to the service of his country and his people. He led Syria firmly and steadfastly on the road to building a modern State, achieving stability and enhancing national unity, solidarity and conciliation among the Syrian people. His name was integrally connected to the Syrian struggle to liberate the Golan. He made this his most noble objective, and no one could deflect him from it.

The late President was a unique symbol of loyalty in the unparalleled way he addressed and defended Arab and Islamic issues. His humanity was the foundation for his outlook. No one is unaware of his commitment to the just causes of concern to the world at large, specifically to the Arab and Islamic world and particularly to issues of liberation and decolonization.

The achievements of President Hafez Al-Assad are countless. He is the type of man who not only friends, but enemies as well would recognize as being wise and a true, insightful statesman. History will certainly recall his love for peace and his sincere desire to guarantee for his country, Syria, for the Arab people in general and for the Middle East region, the necessary conditions for living in peace and prosperity.

It was not strange that a leader such as he made peace in the Middle East a strategic choice, a choice to the dimensions of which he gave his full attention. The success of his commitment has been evident ever since the drive for peace in the region began.

However, President Al-Assad died before he was able to proceed further on this road. He has entrusted this work to those he left behind.

We hope that his soul will rest in peace, especially since he dedicated his life on Earth to the service of his people and his country. May he dwell contentedly in heaven, having left Syria enjoying the dignity and stability we see today. May his soul rest in the heavens, since he has left behind a generation — the best of Syrian men and women — who are loyal and faithful to the commitments he undertook, and thus who will also pursue the path towards the liberation of the Arab lands, the recovery of Syrian sovereignty in the Golan and the establishment of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace.

May God have mercy on his soul. May he live in heaven. May his family enjoy such consolation as they can.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. James Cunningham of the United States of America, who will speak on behalf of the host country.

Mr. Cunningham (United States of America): As the representative of the host country, I wish to offer our condolences on the passing of President Hafez Al-Assad. I would like also to extend our sympathies to his family and to all the Syrian people.

President Al-Assad stood out as a major figure in the Middle East. He made a strategic choice for peace at Madrid in 1991, and we welcome Syria's continued commitment to that choice. The United States strongly believes that the Syrian decision was the right one, and that Syria will continue on the path of peace that President Al-Assad started down. President Al-Assad's strategic choice for peace reflected the compelling logic for all parties to pursue a comprehensive peace and America's willingness to work with all parties to achieve that goal. We will continue to do everything in our power to bring a just, lasting and comprehensive peace to the Middle East.

We join the world in offering our condolences and hope that President Al-Assad's desire for peace will come to fruition as soon as possible.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Mikhail Wehbe, Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Wehbe (Syrian Arab Republic) *(spoke in Arabic)*: It is an hour of sorrow, especially since I have closely known the father and the great leader President Hafez Al-Assad.

Allow me, Sir, on behalf of the people and Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, to express to you our profound thanks and appreciation for your sincere words paying tribute to the leader and symbol of the Syrian Arab people, President Hafez Al-Assad. I would also like to thank you for setting aside this time during the work of the General Assembly to share with Syria its sadness at its great tragedy. I would also like to thank all those who kindly made statements — the Ambassadors who spoke on behalf of the regional groups and the host country, the United States of America — for their sincere words.

We would also like to express our profound appreciation to Mr. Kofi Annan, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, for having paid a visit to our Mission and for offering his sincere condolences on the loss of our late President Hafez Al-Assad in the condolence book at the Mission.

With great bitterness and with a heart heavy with sorrow and fraught with pain, Syria on 10 June 2000 bade farewell to a great and brilliant leader, His Excellency President Hafez Al-Assad, who devoted his life first and foremost to the causes of his people and his nation and to the preservation of its pride and dignity. His Excellency President Al-Assad spent his life struggling for the noble humanitarian values and principles for which he lived and which informed every minute of his life.

Our leader, Al-Assad, was born in the midst of the struggle of our Syrian people for liberation and independence, as well as of the struggle of all the Arab peoples, when the Arab nation was waging its most ferocious battle in order to achieve its legitimate aims of liberation and unity.

President Hafez Al-Assad was not an ordinary leader in Syrian history. This leader was nurtured in the school of love of one's country and of sacrificing for the progress and dignity of one's country. This earned him the trust of his people, who with conviction and renewed faith chose him as their leader and the symbol of their struggle.

During his rule, Syria enjoyed stability and progress. Under him it built its modern cultural edifice.

He has left for his country and for the Arab nation a legacy of which we are all proud and an approach to which Syria will remain committed and will build upon in the days, months and years to come.

Our leader Al-Assad devoted himself to the service of his country, his people and his nation, and to the achievement of the lofty aims for which the Arab masses have struggled. Every minute of his time was devoted to his country, and so were his days and nights. He was indeed totally devoted to his country and to the Arab nation.

The words of one Arab poet are true of him:

"If he held in the palm of his hand nothing but his soul, he would readily give it. Thus, let those who would petition God fear Him."

The leader Al-Assad was one with his masses and the masses identified with their leader. Days after the passing of Mr. Al-Assad, profound sadness still engulfs the people of Syria and the Arab nation, as all have noted, as well as others everywhere who love him. The masses came out in every city and village with great spontaneity and filled the streets of Damascus with great sincerity, refusing to believe the painful news of the passing of their leader Hafez Al-Assad.

The name of Al-Assad has come to be associated with that of Syria. His history has come to be linked to that of Syria and his status with its status. Syria grew stronger under Al-Assad and Al-Assad grew stronger with Syria. The late President Hafez Al-Assad established a prominent status for Syria at the international and regional levels. On the domestic front, he pursued a comprehensive patriotic policy that was consolidated over the years by deep-rooted national unity and by social, cultural and economic achievements exceeding the bounds of imagination. Modern Syria was built under his rule and, because of his tireless interest in the causes of the Arab nation, the leader Al-Assad exhorted Arabs to close ranks in the face of common challenges. In this regard, his first and foremost concern was championing the causes of Arabs and the Arab nation, regaining Arab glory, achieving noble Arab objectives and settling Arab differences.

At the international level, he spared no effort in building sound relations with all countries of the world based on mutual respect and common interests and in championing the causes of right and justice. President Al-Assad believed deeply in the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. At every occasion, he emphasized the need to implement those purposes and principles and their embodiment in the policies of Syria. Through his strategic thinking, President Al-Assad believed that there could be no world peace or fruitful international cooperation without international legitimacy, represented by the United Nations and its resolutions, which must be implemented with a single standard.

In this regard, under his leadership Syria was always a platform for the voice of right and justice and an advocate for the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace based on international legitimacy and the norms of international law. Strategic peace is the option that Syria has chosen, an honourable peace that confers rights where they are due and upholds the dignity and pride of all.

It is a great honour for me to affirm that the policies of President Al-Assad and all the values that he established in the lives of our people have become our legacy and guiding light. We are responsible for our commitment to that legacy and guide and for working to ensure their ongoing relevance. Those who carry on the mission of President Al-Assad will seek to affirm and embody this commitment with greater progress and in defence of the causes of right and justice in our region and throughout the world.

During the past few days since the passing of Mr. Al-Assad, we have seen the sadness shared by everyone we have encountered within and without the United Nations. The late President Al-Assad was the object of universal respect and appreciation that amply reflect his noble qualities, his honourable positions and firm belief in the causes of his people, his country and the entire world. This has been acknowledged even by those who differed with him, because their differences did not affect their amity.

The leadership and people of Syria appreciate the solidarity of all those who stand with us in this difficult time. Their sincere condolences are balm to our deep wounds and to our great tragedy. In conclusion, I would ask members kindly to convey the thanks and appreciation of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and its people for all the sincere emotions that have been expressed and our best wishes to their people and Governments for success in achieving progress and dignity. May God have mercy on the dear departed and make paradise his abode.

Agenda item 125 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/54/915)

The President: I should like, in keeping with the established practice, to invite the attention of the General Assembly to document A/54/915, which has been circulated in the General Assembly Hall this afternoon. It contains a letter from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly, in which he informs the Assembly that 35 Member States are in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the United Nations within the terms of Article 19 of the Charter.

I should like to remind delegations that, under Article 19 of the Charter,

> "A Member of the United Nations which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the General Assembly if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years."

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in document A/54/915?

It was so decided.

Reports of the Fifth Committee

The President: The General Assembly will now consider the reports of the Fifth Committee on agenda items 117, 118, 118 and 164, 119, 121, 124, 128 (a) and (b), 129, 130 (a), 131, 132 and 148, 133, 136, 137, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 149, 150 and 172, 151 and sub-items (a) and (c), 166, 173 and 175.

I request the Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee, Mr. Jan Piotr Jaremczuk of Poland, to introduce the reports of the Fifth Committee in one intervention.

Mr. Jaremczuk (Poland), Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee: I have the honour today to present to the General Assembly the reports of the Fifth Committee on its work during the second part of its resumed fifty-fourth session.

In connection with agenda item 117, entitled "Financial reports and audited financial statements, and reports of the Board of Auditors" and its sub-item (a), "United Nations peacekeeping operations", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/54/506/Add.2. In its report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of draft resolution A/C.5/54/L.58, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

In connection with agenda items 118, entitled "Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations", and 164, entitled "Human resources management", in particular with regard to the question of gratis personnel provided by Governments, the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/54/827/Add.1, whereby the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of draft resolution A/C.5/54/L.81, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Regarding agenda item 119, entitled "Programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999", namely, the question of treatment of perennial activities, the report of the Committee is contained A/54/508/Add.3. In its report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of draft decision A/C.5/54/L.84, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Concerning agenda item 121, entitled "Programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001", the report of the Committee is contained A/54/691/Add.2. In this connection, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of one draft decision, which deals with the question of additional expenditures (A/C.5/54/L.76), and two draft resolutions, one dealing with the analysis of the organizational structure and the personnel and technical resources of the Non-Governmental Organizations Section of the United Nations Secretariat (A/C.5/54/L.86) and the other with the review of the resource requirements for the high-level international intergovernmental event for financing for development and the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries and with the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/54/L.82 (A/C.5/54/L.82). The draft decision and the two draft resolutions were adopted by the Committee without a vote.

In connection with agenda item 124, entitled "Pattern of conferences", considering in particular a letter from the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences addressed to the Chairman of the Fifth Committee regarding the holding of the substantive

session of the Committee on Conferences at Nairobi, a draft resolution (A/C.5/54/L.83) was proposed by the representatives of Kenya, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania. The report of the Committee is contained in A/54/690/Add.2, whereby the Committee informs the General Assembly that it decided to postpone consideration of the draft resolution to a later date pending the receipt of a statement of the programme budget implications of the draft resolution and the related report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

With regard to agenda item 128 (a), on the financing of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force, the report of the Committee is contained in document A/54/896. In its report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of draft resolution A/C.5/54/L.80, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Regarding agenda item 128 (b), on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, the report of the Committee is contained in document A/54/897. In this connection, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.5/54/L.69 by 99 votes in favour to 2 against.

Concerning agenda item 129, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission and the United Nations Observer Mission in Angola", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/54/504/Add.1, whereby the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of draft resolution A/C.5/54/L.59, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Mr. Ingólfsson (Iceland), Vice-President, took the Chair.

In connection with agenda item 130 (a), on the financing of the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission, the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/54/510/Add.1 In this connection, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of one draft resolution (A/C.5/54/L.88) regarding the financing of the Mission and one draft decision (A/C.5/54/L.94), dealing with the Mission's subsistence allowance. Both the draft resolution and the draft decision were adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Regarding agenda item 131, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/54/899. In its report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of draft resolution A/C.5/54/L.60, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Concerning agenda items 132, entitled "Financing and liquidation of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia", and 148, entitled "Financing of the Military Observer Group of the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/54/910, whereby the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of draft decision A/C.5/54/L.75, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Concerning agenda item 133, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Protection Force, the United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia, the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force and the United Nations Peace Forces headquarters", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/54/900. In this connection, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of draft resolution A/C.5/54/L.61, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Concerning agenda item 136, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/54/901. In its report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of draft resolution A/C.5/54/L.62, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Regarding agenda item 137, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/54/902. In this regard, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of draft resolution A/C.5/54/L.63, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

In connection with agenda item 141, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/54/903. In this connection, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of draft resolution A/C.5/54/L.64, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Concerning agenda item 142, entitled "Financing of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of

Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/54/678/Add.1, whereby the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of draft resolution A/C.5/54/L.85, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

With regard to agenda item 143, entitled "Financing of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/54/679/Add.1. In its report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of draft resolution A/C.5/54/L.73, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Concerning agenda item 144, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/54/904. In this connection, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of draft resolution A/C.5/54/L.65, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

In connection with agenda item 145, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium and the Civilian Police Support Group", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/54/905, whereby the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of draft resolution A/C.5/54/L.66, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

With regard to agenda item 146, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/54/906. In its report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of draft resolution A/C.5/54/L.67, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

With regard to agenda item 147, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Support Mission in Haiti, the United Nations Transition Mission in Haiti and the United Nations Civilian Police Mission in Haiti", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/54/907, whereby the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of draft resolution A/C.5/54/L.70, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Concerning agenda item 149, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/54/908, whereby the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of draft resolution A/C.5/54/L.74, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

With regard to agenda items 150, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone", and 172, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/54/686/Add.1, whereby the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of draft resolution A/C.5/54/L.68, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

In connection with agenda item 151 (a), on the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations, the report of the Committee is contained in document A/54/684/Add.2, whereby the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of three draft resolutions, one dealing with the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi (A/C.5/54/L.71), another with the support account for peacekeeping operations (A/C.5/54/L.87) and the third with reimbursement of contingent-owned equipment (A/C.5/54/L.92). The three draft resolutions were adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Also under agenda item 151, the Committee considered sub-item (c) on the relocation of South Africa to the group of Member States set out in paragraph 3 (c) of General Assembly resolution 43/232. In the same report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of draft decision A/C.5/54/L.72, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

In connection with agenda item 166, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/54/674/Add.1, whereby the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of draft resolution

A/C.5/54/L.77, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

With regard to agenda item 173, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/54/687/Add.2. In its report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of draft resolution A/C.5/54/L.78, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Finally, concerning agenda item 175, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/54/830/Add.1, whereby the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of draft resolution A/C.5/54/L.79, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

With your permission, Sir, I should like to say a few personal words from the bottom of my heart to my friends and colleagues from the Fifth Committee who are present here.

Since my diplomatic assignment will soon come to an end after five hard years in the Fifth Committee and I will be leaving New York, let me use this opportunity to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to all my dear colleagues for having elected me a Bureau member and Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee during the fifty-fourth session, which enabled me to make a greater personal contribution to the work of the Committee than I have ever made before.

I should like to express thanks to anybody in this Organization who contributed to and assisted me in fulfilling my function. First, I should like to thank our Chairman, Ms. Penny Wensley, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations, for her excellent leadership. I thank the secretariat of the Fifth Committee, headed by Mr. Joseph Acakpo-Satchivi, with the strong support of his Deputy, Mrs. Nora Benary, assisted by staff members Patricia Morales, Mimi Diaz-Westberg and Paul Dysenchuk, who conducted the informal consultations at this session and know well how important a role Mrs. Benary plays in the process of negotiations and in the preparation of draft resolutions. I thank her very much for that.

I am fully aware that it is impossible to mention all the names of persons essentially involved in our work and who assisted me in performing my function, but let me call a few of them by name: Ambassador Mselle, Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions — it is needless to recall the role of the Advisory Committee in our work; Mr. Joseph Connor, Under-Secretary-General for Management; and his devoted and hard-working staff, especially Mr. Jean-Pierre Halbwachs, the Controller, and Mr. Warren Sach, Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division of the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts. I should like also like to thank Director Hocine Medili and his highly professional staff of the Field Administration and Logistics Division of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations for their strong support and contribution to our work and to my functions, especially during the second resumed session, which was, as we know, almost fully devoted to the financing of peacekeeping operations — over 20 field missions.

I also would like to thank my wife Lucyna, present here in this Hall now, for her moral support, understanding and patience, especially when I often returned home well after midnight from my Fifth Committee work during the fifty-fourth session.

I wish the Assembly every success in the coming session of the new millennium, especially during the next, when the Committee will struggle over the new scale of assessments, an extremely important and sensitive item for the Member States and for the United Nations. I wish representatives and their families good health. May God bless them all.

The Acting President: If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the reports of the Fifth Committee which are before the Assembly today.

It was so decided.

The Acting President: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote.

The positions of delegations regarding the recommendations of the Fifth Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records.

May I remind members that, under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, i.e., either in the Committee or in plenary meeting unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

May I remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendations contained in the reports of the Fifth Committee, I would like to advise representatives that we shall proceed to take decisions in the same manner as was done in the Fifth Committee, unless the Secretariat is notified otherwise. This means that where recorded or separate votes were taken, we will do the same. I should also hope that we may proceed to adopt without a vote those recommendations that were adopted without a vote in the Fifth Committee.

Agenda item 117 (*continued*)

Financial reports and audited financial statements, and reports of the Board of Auditors

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/506/Add.2)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 54/13 C).

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 117.

Agenda item 118 (*continued*)

Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/511/Add.3)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the two draft decisions recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 8 of its report.

We turn first to draft decision I, entitled "Guidelines for Internal Control Standards". The Fifth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft decision I was adopted.

The Acting President: The Fifth Committee adopted draft decision II, entitled "Action taken on certain documents", without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft decision II was adopted.

The Acting President: We have concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 118.

Agenda items 118 and 164 (*continued*)

Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations

Human resources management

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/827/Add.1)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution, entitled "Gratis personnel provided by Governments", without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 54/264).

The Acting President: I call on the representative of the United States of America, who wishes to speak in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted.

Mr. Hays (United States of America): My delegation welcomes the resolution on gratis personnel that the Assembly has just approved, as it provides a more balanced approach to gratis issues.

We appreciate the assistance of all those representatives who worked diligently to shape the consensus on this resolution. However, we also believe at the same time that the resolution could have been even more balanced, particularly in the light of the urgent need of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations for adequate expertise to respond to peacekeeping operations now under way. As we said during the Fifth Committee discussions last month, the General Assembly should go on record with a clear encouragement of the Secretary-General to use those provisions of resolution 51/243 when warranted. Those provisions allow the Secretary-General to use gratis personnel under exceptional circumstances. The resolution we have just adopted does include, although in a somewhat muted fashion, such an encouragement. In paragraph 5 the resolution recalls the existing mandates under relevant General Assembly resolutions on gratis personnel.

Those mandates of course include resolution 51/243. In paragraph 4 of that resolution, the General Assembly outlined the exceptional circumstances under which the Secretary-General is authorized to accept gratis personnel. As described in that resolution, the Secretary-General can accept gratis personnel for very specialized functions if they have expertise that is not available to the United Nations and are used for a limited and specific period of time. We can also accept gratis personnel if they provide temporary and urgent assistance in the case of a new or expanding mandate, pending a General Assembly decision on the level of resources to meet those mandates.

As Member States, we must realize that there will continue to be unique circumstances when temporary resource personnel in highly specialized areas must be obtained quickly if the United Nations is to do the job that we have mandated it to do. These circumstances may be limited in number, but the mechanisms to address these needs must not be further restricted. Rather, they should be made even more flexible to help in handling surge requirements when they arise.

We should not forget that the Secretary-General appeared before the Fifth Committee last October and appealed to Member States to help give him the flexibility to respond promptly and effectively to new challenges as they arise. If we are to assure that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations can fulfil its mandate, we must respond to this call and provide the Secretariat with the resources needed, in whatever form is most readily available. As representatives to this Organization, we should not be seeking ways to further limit the Secretary-General's ability to meet unusual circumstances, but should instead ensure that he has the flexible arrangements available to him that ultimately serve to meet the needs of the Member States.

The Acting President: There are no further requests in explanation of position. We have concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda items 118 and 164.

Agenda item 119 (*continued*)

Programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/508/Add.3)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft decision, entitled "Relationship between the treatment of perennial activities in the programme budget and the use of the contingency fund", without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: We have concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 119.

Agenda item 121 (*continued*)

Programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/691/Add.2)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the two draft resolutions recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 16 of its report, and on the two draft decisions recommended in paragraph 17 of the same report.

We turn first to draft resolution I, entitled "Analysis of the organizational structure and the personnel and technical resources of the Non-

Governmental Organizations Section of the United Nations Secretariat". The Fifth Committee adopted this draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 54/265).

The Acting President: We turn now to draft resolution II, entitled "Review of the resource requirements for the high-level international intergovernmental event on financing for development and the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries". The Fifth Committee adopted this draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 54/258 B).

The Acting President: We turn now to the two draft decisions.

The Fifth Committee adopted draft decision I, entitled "Estimates in respect of matters of which the Security Council is seized", without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft decision I was adopted.

The Acting President: The Fifth Committee adopted draft decision II, entitled "Additional expenditures referred to in paragraphs 10 and 11 of annex I to General Assembly resolution 41/213", without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft decision II was adopted.

The Acting President: We have concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 121.

Agenda item 124 (*continued*)

Pattern of conferences

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/690/Add.2)

The Acting President: May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to take note of the report of the Fifth Committee contained in document A/54/690/Add.2?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: We have concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 124.

Agenda item 128

Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping forces in the Middle East

(a) United Nations Disengagement Observer Force

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/896)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force", without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 54/266).

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 128.

(b) United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/897)

The Acting President: I give the floor to the representative of Israel in explanation of vote before the voting.

Mr. Jacob (Israel): Israel will vote against the draft resolution contained in document A/54/897. I wish to address, in this context, some recent events that may bring us further up to date on the issues at hand.

As the Assembly may know, the Government of Israel adopted a decision on 5 March 2000 to withdraw its forces from Lebanon. That decision was carried out on 24 May, as the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) redeployed to the international border. It should be emphasized that the IDF completed its withdrawal swiftly and with maximum restraint, despite efforts by terrorists in the area to provoke a confrontation. The IDF, in fact, took pains to avoid any actions that might have endangered innocent civilians, even after terrorists cynically sought to use civilians as human shields. The Israeli forces were soon deployed safely on the Israeli side of the international border.

Israel has repeatedly expressed its preference for carrying out the withdrawal in the framework of a peace agreement. However, these efforts were not reciprocated in kind. Therefore, Israel finally undertook to withdraw unilaterally. The withdrawal was completed in full compliance with Security Council resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978). It should be recalled that resolution 425 (1978) calls not only for the withdrawal of the Israeli forces, but also for the restoration of international peace and security and the return of the effective authority of the Government of Lebanon to the area.

Now that the withdrawal has been concluded, we look forward to the fulfilment of the remaining aspects of the resolution. The goal of bringing about international peace and security, as well as that of restoring the effective authority of Lebanon, is cited in the resolution as an objective of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). Israel hopes that UNIFIL will have the ability and the resources, including the assistance of Member States, needed to rise to the enormous responsibilities presented by resolution 425 (1978). We expect that the Government of Lebanon will fulfil its responsibility to ensure peace and security within its borders. International law prohibits any State from allowing its territory to be a ground for terrorist activities. Israel reserves its right to act in self-defence, should the need arise.

As we have mentioned before, Israel is forced to vote against this draft resolution because it singles out and faults Israel unfairly and entirely for an incident that was initiated by a terrorist group using human shields. Moreover, it should be noted that this is the only time a draft resolution calls for one particular party to pay damages for the property of United Nations peacekeepers as a result of a clash. My delegation regrets that this draft resolution has been tarnished by the needless addition of the three paragraphs that single out Israel. Otherwise, Israel could support this draft resolution.

Indeed, Israel recently took steps to intensify our support for the peacekeeping operations. As the Assembly will recall, Israel upgraded from group (c) to group (b) in the peacekeeping operations budget. It is unfortunate that we are forced to vote against this draft resolution in its current form merely due to the confrontational words added to it. It is time to adapt to the new realities on the ground.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon", recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 11 of its report (A/54/897).

A single separate vote has been requested on the first preambular paragraph and on paragraphs 2, 3 and 14 of the draft resolution. Is there any objection to that request?

I give the floor to the representative of Lebanon in explanation of vote before the voting.

Mr. Diab (Lebanon): We have heard the representative of Israel attack Lebanon using unacceptable words. What we would like to ask is, what is the reason in the Israeli definition?

The occupation of Lebanon for 22 years, in violation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978), and the terrorizing of the Lebanese population by killing civilians and bombing civilian infrastructure —

The Acting President: We are in the midst of proceeding to the voting. May I request that the representative of Lebanon wait until after the voting to explain his vote?

Mr. Diab (Lebanon): This is not an explanation of vote. This is in right of reply.

The Acting President: I shall now put to the vote the first preambular paragraph and operative paragraphs 2, 3 and 14 of the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 11 of its report (A/54/897), on which a single separate vote has been requested.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Benin, Bolivia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, Gabon, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, Oman,

Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Tonga, Tunisia, Uganda, Ukraine, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, United States of America

Abstaining:

Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay

The first preambular paragraph and operative paragraphs 2, 3, and 14 were retained by 64 votes to 2, with 43 abstentions.

The Acting President: I now put to the vote the draft resolution contained in paragraph 11 of document A/54/897 as a whole.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Egypt, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tonga, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, United States of America

Abstaining:

None

The draft resolution as a whole was adopted by 110 votes to 2 (resolution 54/267).

The Acting President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to make statements in explanation of vote on the resolution just adopted.

Mr. Hays (United States of America): The United States wants to state its strong support for the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), which is implementing a difficult and important mandate. We also support the expansion of this peacekeeping mission that the Secretary-General has recently proposed. However, we believe that the use of General Assembly funding resolutions to pursue claims against Member States is procedurally incorrect. This is the reason why we opposed resolution 53/227 last year — and resolutions 52/237 and 51/233 in previous years — since they contain sections that require Israel to pay for the costs stemming from the Qana incident in 1996. Those resolutions were not consensus resolutions.

Since shortly after the inception of the United Nations, the procedure that has been followed is that the Secretary-General presents and pursues the settlement of Organization claims against a State or States. This procedure was first begun in 1946 in the Middle East and continues for peacekeeping-related damages claims in the Balkans. Using a funding resolution to legislate a claim is, in our view, inappropriate. It also politicizes the work of the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly and should be avoided both now and in the future.

Mr. Diab (Lebanon): I will speak in explanation of vote.

The resolution on the financing of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) confirmed that it was the responsibility of the occupying State — Israel — to fulfil its obligation and responsibilities under international law. Lebanon's position is based on the necessity of the aggressor State — Israel — to assume full responsibility for its acts of aggression against Lebanon, especially since the aggression was deliberate and directed against the United Nations.

Israel has ignored General Assembly resolutions 51/233, 52/237 and 53/227, which have determined its responsibility for this aggression. The General Assembly has once again demonstrated today that when it comes to the issue of financing peacekeeping operations, collective financial responsibility goes hand-in-hand with collective responsibility for human lives, the sanctity of the peacekeeping missions and the responsibility to ensure its safety.

UNIFIL is another peacekeeping mission success story. Peacekeeping and national resistance have proven to be two fundamental prerequisites for liberation from occupation, a right enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

We have full confidence in the Secretary-General to ensure that the contents of the resolution will be implemented. We will continue to monitor the development of the situation, and we hope that the next performance report on UNIFIL will reflect the implementation of this resolution.

Mr. Nakkari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation has asked for the floor to reply to the allegations made by the representative of the Israeli occupation.

The resolution just adopted affirms Israel's responsibility —

The Acting President: I would respectfully request that representatives limit their comments to explanations of vote.

Mr. Nakkari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation has asked for the floor to exercise its right of reply to respond to the allegations made by the representative of the Israeli occupation.

The Acting President: As I stated, in accordance with the rules of procedure, the exercise of the right of reply can be conducted only after voting proceedings, and at the end of the meeting.

Mr. Nakkari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): The resolution just adopted once again reaffirms Israel's responsibility for its attack in April 1996 against United Nations headquarters in southern Lebanon.

The Acting President: I will have to ask the speaker to limit his comments to an explanation of vote after the voting. I have repeatedly stated that, in accordance with the rules of procedure, the right of reply can only be exercised after we have conducted the voting and before the end of the meeting.

Mr. Abdalla (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya): In explaining my vote I shall definitely be replying to some of what the representative of Israel said earlier. In that light, would the President prefer that I make my statement after the voting procedure has come to an end?

The Acting President: I respectfully ask that the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya wait until the end of the meeting to make his statement, as we are obliged to proceed in accordance with the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

Mr. Abdalla (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya): I would point out that when Israel spoke in explanation of vote it was permitted to allude to other matters that fall outside the voting procedure. Thus, we would be obliged to respond to the Israeli allegations in explaining our own vote. I would ask the President to propose a way in which we can do this, as what we have to say certainly relates to this vote.

The Acting President: I have no intention of denying any Member State the exercise of its right of reply, but I respectfully ask the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to wait until the end of the meeting to speak in exercise of that right.

We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 128.

Agenda item 129 (*continued*)

Financing of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission and the United Nations Observer Mission in Angola

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/504/Add.1)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by

the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. The draft resolution was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I consider that the General Assembly wishes to adopt the draft resolution?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 54/17 B).

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 129.

Agenda item 130 (*continued*)

Financing of the activities arising from Security Council resolution 687 (1991)

(a) United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/510/Add.1)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 8 of its report and on the draft decision recommended in paragraph 9 of the same report.

We turn first to the draft resolution, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission". The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 54/18 B).

The Acting President: We turn now to the draft decision, entitled "Payment of mission subsistence allowance in the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission". The draft decision was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly too wishes to adopt the draft decision?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 130.

Agenda item 131

Financing of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/899)

The Acting President: The Assembly will take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. The draft resolution was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly also wishes to adopt the draft resolution?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 54/268).

The Acting President: I call now on delegations wishing to make statements in explanation of position on the decision just taken.

Mr. Herrera (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Let me reaffirm the position that my delegation stated in the Fifth Committee. My delegation has associated itself with the adoption without a vote of the draft resolution on agenda item 131, but has two concerns. The first relates to the apparent loss of $375 million, which the General Assembly had authorized 10 years ago for the holding of a referendum, which should have already taken place. The second is that we do not yet know what options have been presented to the Sahraoui people relating to its future.

We continue to think that the best way to attain our common objective is to proceed to a referendum.

Mr. Zahid (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): We are aware that the Assembly long ago decided that delegations should as far as possible explain their vote only once, either in plenary meeting or in Committee. But as another delegation has already explained its vote in both forums, my delegation too wishes to do so, with apologies to the Assembly.

The Assembly has just adopted, without a vote as usual, its resolution on the financing of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). It was Morocco that had initiated the referendum in this part of its territory, which it regained legally following the Madrid agreement and the opinion of the International Court of Justice. Morocco has thus given unreserved material, financial and moral support to MINURSO, as acknowledged in all reports of the Secretary-General.

We are convinced that MINURSO, which has made enormous efforts, should continue to enjoy the support of Member States. In our view, such support is all the more appropriate at this very difficult stage for the mission, when the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Baker, is using his good offices in an attempt to break the deadlock that has affected the implementation process for several months.

It is common knowledge that the identification process has given rise to widespread dissatisfaction: some 140,000 applicants have been rejected by the identification centres and have appealed their rejections. Those appeals have been duly received by the relevant United Nations offices. The first problem that is likely to arise is connected with the various provisions of the protocols and guidelines governing such appeals.

The second problem relates to the registration and repatriation of refugees and of all Sahraouis who reside outside the Territory. The third problem is that of what has been termed revision: applicants who were accepted by the identification centres and whose names were communicated to us, but who were dropped from the final lists. Morocco has requested that they be restored to those lists.

There are a number of problems, and we consider that the international community should and must continue to support this peacekeeping mission; we are convinced that, with due effort, it will succeed.

Mr. Belaoura (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): My delegation fully endorses the statements by the representative of Mexico a few moments ago and in the Fifth Committee last week.

We believe that the resolution of the Western Sahara conflict lies in the self-determination referendum that is the cornerstone of the settlement plan. Through that referendum, the Sahraoui people will be able to express itself on its future in accordance with international law and, particularly, with General Assembly resolutions.

But as we noted last week, we have recently seen certain members of the Security Council and others attempt to change the approach. This change of approach has affected the last three resolutions adopted by the Security Council on this matter, including Council resolutions 1292 (2000) and, most recently, 1301 (2000). It also affected the debate on the adoption of the latter resolution, to the effect that the Western Sahara settlement plan that has applied since 1992 could possibly be abandoned in favour of some other alternative. Let me recall that the settlement plan enjoys the support of the international community and the endorsement of the Security Council and of the two parties. It is a comprehensive plan whose purpose is to carry out the self-determination referendum for which the Sahraoui people has been waiting since January 1992.

Moreover, in addition to the Security Council resolutions to which I have referred, the last two reports of the Secretary-General have given rise to certain interpretations which, because of problems encountered in implementing the settlement plan, could encourage the search for another option. For the information of the General Assembly, I should observe that among the problems with respect to the recent reports and Security Council resolutions is that relating to the context in which the resolutions were adopted and to the voting itself — in which, for the first time, there were abstentions and even negative votes. This new trend can be explained by the existence of problems impeding the implementation of the settlement plan; generally speaking, these include the appeals and the lack of a proper mechanism for carrying out the referendum.

For its part, Algeria considers these to be normal problems that could arise in any such important and complex process, but that can be resolved through dialogue and cooperation between Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO — cooperation which has existed over the past nine years with respect to a number of other problems that I need not go into here. On the specific issue of the approximately 130,000 appeals by applicants rejected by the MINURSO Identification Commission, there is good reason to apply the May 1999 agreement accepted and signed by the two parties to the conflict, Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO, and endorsed by the Security Council. The protocols on the appeals process have been issued as United Nations documents.

Algeria considers that, in spite of the present problems, the process of resolving the conflict in Western Sahara has made considerable progress towards the full implementation of the settlement plan. It would be unfair to ignore that progress, which includes the ceasefire that has obtained in Western Sahara since 6 September 1991; the progress made in

the identification process, which has made it possible to identify at least 200,000 individuals in Western Sahara; and the pre-registration of Sahraoui refugees, of whom the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has registered more than 100,000 to date.

It would thus be unfair and unwise at this stage to contemplate the abandonment of this process or of the settlement plan, which represent the fruit of 10 years of effort and human, material and financial investment by the international community.

The question of Western Sahara is a decolonization issue falling under resolution 1514 (XV) adopted in 1960, on which the settlement plan is based, and under the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly each year, calling upon the two parties, Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO, to cooperate with the international community, with MINURSO and with the Secretary-General in the implementation of the plan and in the holding of the self-determination referendum for which the Sahraoui people has been waiting for 25 years, both in its territory and in refugee camps.

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 131.

Agenda items 132 and 148

Financing and liquidation of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia

Financing of the Military Observer Group of the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/910)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. The draft decision, entitled "Losses of United Nations property in peacekeeping operations", was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes also to adopt the draft decision?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda items 132 and 148.

Agenda item 133

Financing of the United Nations Protection Force, the United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia, the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force and the United Nations Peace Forces headquarters

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/900)

The Acting President: The Assembly will take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. The draft resolution was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly too wishes to adopt the draft resolution?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 54/269).

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 133.

Agenda item 136

Financing of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/901)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 54/270).

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 136.

Agenda item 137

Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/902)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 54/271).

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 137.

Agenda item 141

Financing of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/903)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. The draft resolution was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes also to adopt the draft resolution?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 54/272).

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 141.

Agenda item 142 (*continued*)

Financing of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/678/Add.1)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 54/239 B).

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 142.

Agenda item 143 (*continued*)

Financing of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/679/Add.1)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. The draft resolution was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly likewise wishes to adopt the draft resolution?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 54/240 B).

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 143.

Agenda item 144

Financing of the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/904)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 54/273).

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 144.

Agenda item 145

Financing of the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium and the Civilian Police Support Group

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/905)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. The draft resolution, entitled "Financing of the Civilian Police Support Group", was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly also wishes to adopt the draft resolution?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 54/274).

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 145.

Agenda item 146

Financing of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/906)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 54/275).

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 146.

Agenda item 147

Financing of the United Nations Support Mission in Haiti, the United Nations Transition Mission in Haiti and the United Nations Civilian Police Mission in Haiti

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/907)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Civilian Police Mission in Haiti", without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 54/276).

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 147.

Agenda item 149

Financing of the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/908)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 54/277).

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 149.

Agenda items 150 and 172 (*continued*)

Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone

Financing of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/686/Add.1)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone and the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone", without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 54/241 B).

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda items 150 and 172.

Agenda item 151 (*continued*)

Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations

(a) Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations

(c) Relocation of South Africa to the group of Member States set out in paragraph 3 (c) of General Assembly resolution 43/232

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/684/Add.2)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on three draft resolutions recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 14 of its report and on two draft decisions recommended by the Committee in paragraph 15 of the same report.

We turn first to the three draft resolutions.

The Fifth Committee adopted draft resolution I, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi, Italy", without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 54/278).

The Acting President: The Fifth Committee adopted draft resolution II, entitled "Support account for peacekeeping operations", without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 54/243 B).

The Acting President: The Fifth Committee adopted draft resolution III, entitled "Reformed procedures for determining reimbursement to Member States for contingent-owned equipment", without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution III was adopted (resolution 54/19 B).

The Acting President: We turn next to the two draft decisions.

Draft decision I is entitled "Reimbursement to the Governments of troop-contributing States" and was recommended by the Fifth Committee for adoption. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt draft decision I?

Draft decision I was adopted.

The Acting President: The Fifth Committee adopted draft decision II, entitled "Relocation of South Africa to the group of Member States set out in paragraph 3 (c) of General Assembly resolution 43/232", without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft decision II was adopted.

The Acting President: I give the floor to the representative of the United States in explanation of position on the draft resolutions just adopted.

Mr. Hays (United States of America): My delegation has asked for the floor at this time to recall the many serious statements made by ambassadors during the resumed session in May regarding the need to strengthen the United Nations peacekeeping capacity, both operationally and financially. At this critical juncture, when we are expecting the United Nations to undertake bigger and more complex peacekeeping activities than ever before, it is incumbent on the Fifth Committee to approve those needed resources that will enable the United Nations, and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) in particular, to carry out its critical mandates.

We made important progress towards that end during the resumed session of the Fifth Committee. Notably, the Committee membership welcomed positive developments in the utilization of the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi and asked that the Secretary-General report to the General Assembly on the review of the concept of the operation of the Base as soon as possible. As soon as the reports of both the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions show that the Base has proved to be an extremely useful and cost-effective means of rapid deployment and procurement for missions in the field, and given its even greater potential for support of current and upcoming peacekeeping needs, the United States delegation hopes that the Secretary-General will, in the context of his review, present, for the Fifth Committee's consideration during the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly this fall, a comprehensive proposal for resources to expand the Base.

Regarding the issue of the support account, the debate was lively and reflected the full range of views of Member States. The resolution underscores the importance placed by all Member States on the ability of the United Nations to respond and rapidly deploy new peacekeeping operations. It also highlights the need for adequate funding to enable DPKO to effectively support missions in the field. My delegation regrets that the Committee was unable to approve the two posts requested for the Rapid Deployment Management Unit during the Committee's deliberations. However, the United States delegation remains convinced that an effective and enhanced roster system is an important first step towards enabling the United Nations to get needed expertise on the ground on a timely basis. We hope that the Committee will reconsider the resource needs necessary to strengthen rapid deployment capacity as soon as possible.

My delegation remains deeply concerned that we, the Member States, have yet to deal with the serious needs of DPKO, both structurally and in human resource terms. With five new, major, complex peacekeeping missions launched over the past year, and a sixth on the horizon, DPKO staff are performing heroically, but there is no doubt that they are stretched to the breaking point. We wish to draw the Secretary-General's attention to his obligation, reiterated in the support account resolution, to request adequate funding to maintain the capacity of DPKO. In this regard, we urge him to conduct a thorough examination of current personnel needs, both permanent and temporary, and to determine precisely what additional staff are needed.

In the light of such a review and other relevant reviews, including that conducted by the Secretary-General's panel on peacekeeping operations, the request by the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, we urge the Fifth Committee to consider, during the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, the need for enhancing DPKO's staff. The membership cannot afford to put the demands of peacekeeping on hold. While its work is technical in nature, the Fifth Committee deliberations must be attuned to the realities facing United Nations peacekeeping today. It is clear that unless we take concrete steps to fix peacekeeping now, this core function of the United Nations will remain at risk.

The resumed session represented another critical milestone in our shared endeavour to strengthen the ability of the United Nations to conduct effective peacekeeping operations. After 27 years, a growing number of Member States have come to recognize the need to create a permanent, stable system for apportioning the expenses of the United Nations peacekeeping operations. There is no doubt that the future of United Nations peacekeeping depends on a sound, fair system to determine how peacekeeping expenses are borne by the Members. While there are significant differences that must be bridged, my delegation is greatly encouraged by the degree of common ground that has emerged around the need to address this essential question. We have heard a wide range of very thoughtful views from delegations from all regions, many of whom echo the same fundamental principles with regard to guidelines for reform of the peacekeeping finance system.

The United States delegation would like to express its appreciation to six delegations in particular — Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Israel, Latvia and the Philippines — which announced their willingness to make concrete financial commitments to the future of United Nations peacekeeping, and to the South African delegation, which declared its strong belief in the need for a secure system for peacekeeping finance and demonstrated its commitment through a voluntary deferral of its well-justified request for an adjustment of its own assessment.

The leadership shown by all of these Member States bodes very well for the ability of the body to reach a consensus for action on this critical issue. We look forward to continuing the work with all of our colleagues over the coming months and at the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, to devise and implement a series of measures that, together, will safeguard the future of United Nations peacekeeping well into the new century.

The Acting President: We have concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 151.

Agenda item 166 (*continued*)

Financing of the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/674/Add.1)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now proceed to take a decision on the draft resolution

recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 54/245 B).

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 166.

Agenda item 173 (*continued*)

Financing of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/687/Add.2)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 54/246 C).

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 173.

Agenda item 175 (*continued*)

Financing of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/830/Add.1)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 54/260 B).

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 175.

The General Assembly has thus concluded consideration of all the reports of the Fifth Committee before it.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

Allocation of items and organization of work

The Acting President: Members will recall that, at its 3rd plenary meeting, on 17 September 1999, the General Assembly decided to allocate agenda item 97 to the Second Committee and that sub-item (a) of agenda item 97 remained open for consideration during the fifty-fourth session.

In order to proceed expeditiously on the item, may I take it that the Assembly wishes to consider sub-item (a) of agenda item 97 directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: May I further take it that the Assembly agrees to proceed immediately to the consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 97?

I see no objection. We shall now proceed accordingly.

Agenda item 97 (*continued*)

Macroeconomic policy questions

(a) High-level international intergovernmental consideration of financing for development

Draft resolution (A/54/L.82)

The Acting President: I should like to recall for the benefit of members that the Assembly has adopted, under agenda item 121, a resolution entitled "Review of the resource requirements for the high-level international intergovernmental event on financing for development and the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries", contained in document A/54/691/Add.1. Part II of that resolution refers to draft resolution A/54/L.82.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/54/L.82. The Assembly will take a decision on the draft resolution, entitled "Preparations for the substantive preparatory process and the high-level international event".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/54/L.82?

Draft resolution A/54/L.82 was adopted (resolution 54/279).

The Acting President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 97.

Agenda item 167 (*continued*)

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization

Draft resolution A/54/L.86

The Acting President: I give the floor to the representative of Austria to introduce draft resolution A/54/L.86.

Ms. Schneebauer (Austria): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/54/L.86, entitled "Agreement concerning the relationship between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization".

May I thank all the sponsors of this draft resolution for their support. I should like to announce that, since the publication of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/54/L.86: Armenia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, China, Ecuador, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Japan, Liberia, New Zealand, Norway, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Uganda.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) of 24 September 1996 prohibits any nuclear-weapon test explosion and any other nuclear explosion. In the preamble to the Treaty, the States parties to the Treaty recognize that the cessation of all nuclear-weapon test explosions and all other nuclear explosions, by constraining the development and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and ending the development of advanced new types of nuclear weapons, constitutes an effective measure of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in all its aspects. Thus, the Treaty will contribute to the realization of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization was established in New York on 19 November 1996 at the first meeting of States signatories to the Treaty. The seat of the Commission is in Vienna. The Commission was established for the purpose of carrying out the necessary preparations for the effective implementation of the Treaty, including ensuring the operationalization of the Treaty's verification regime at entry into force. The Commission established a Provisional Technical Secretariat, which took up its work on 17 March 1997 at the seat of the Commission in Vienna.

By its resolution 54/65 of 6 December 1999, the General Assembly invited the Secretary-General to take the appropriate steps to conclude, with the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, an agreement to regulate the relationship between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission, to be submitted to the General Assembly for its approval.

Following the completion of the negotiations, the Agreement to Regulate the Relationship between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization was submitted to the Preparatory Commission for approval. By a letter dated 5 May 2000, the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission advised the Secretary-General of the United Nations that on that date the Preparatory Commission, at its eleventh session, by decision CTBT/PC-11/CR.7, had approved the Agreement.

On 26 May 2000, the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission signed the Agreement, which is now before the General Assembly for its approval.

The Acting President: We have heard the only speaker in the debate on this item. We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/54/L.86.

Belarus has announced its wish to become a sponsor of the draft resolution.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/54/L.86, entitled "Agreement concerning the relationship between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/54/L.86?

Draft resolution A/54/L.86 was adopted (resolution 54/280).

The Acting President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 167.

A number of delegations have asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I remind members that statements in exercise of the right of reply shall be limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Nakkari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I apologize for the confusion, but when we asked for the floor the first time, we did so to exercise the right of reply. When the presidency said that we could not do so, I sought to explain our position on the resolution. There has been a misunderstanding: we never explained our position on the draft resolution in the Fifth Committee, but only made a statement, as is perfectly clear from paragraph 6 of the report of the Fifth Committee in document A/54/897. Therefore, we feel it is only right that we should explain our position in the General Assembly.

The resolution reaffirms the responsibility of Israel with regard to the attack on the United Nations headquarters in Qana. I would like to reaffirm that, after 22 years of struggle by the Lebanese people, Israel withdrew from Lebanon. This withdrawal, which has yet to be completed, took place after 22 years of destruction, killing and bombing of innocent civilians in Lebanon. Israel has falsely accused the honourable Lebanese people who were defending their land of being terrorists. Israel itself has practised terrorism since it was established on the occupied Arab territories. Israel has disregarded the wishes of the international community, but the international community knows the truth about Israel and its hostile intentions, which are no secret. Israel should accept liability for its aggression against south Lebanon over the years. To describe honest citizens as terrorists is to make a false accusation. Israel must admit to its acts of terrorism, which it has been committing throughout its entire history.

Let me repeat once again that the withdrawal, which has yet to be completed, was not undertaken to show that Israel is a peace-loving nation, but resulted from the courage of the Lebanese resistance, which forced Israel to withdraw from southern Lebanon. Once again, we reaffirm that this withdrawal does not mean in any way that Israel did not commit that heinous crime against the United Nations headquarters in Qana. It does not in any way mean that Israel should be declared innocent or that it should not be held liable for its crime and pay for it.

Mr. Abdalla (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): We are grateful to you, Mr. President, for giving us the chance to speak. We wanted to explain our vote on draft resolution A/C.5/54/L.69. That right was extended to Israel before us. At the outset, we would like to place on the record that Israel occupied parts of Lebanon in the mid-seventies. Israel's declaration of a security zone in southern Lebanon dates back to 1985.

Apparently, we live in a time when facts are being inverted and distorted before the entire world. Today we have heard the Israeli representative, who believes that Israel was gracious enough for having complied with United Nations resolutions more than 20 years after their adoption. He even went as far as setting conditions to be complied with by the Lebanese State.

Israel began to implement its withdrawal strategy by punishing honourable Lebanese civilians who defeated Israel and by violating the provisions of the international Memorandum of Understanding concluded in 1996. I can think of many *Christian Science Monitor* editorials, but I will cite the issue of 16 February 2000. Bahman Biktiari and Richard Norton provided analyses that compared Israel to a boxer who runs outside the ring and starts throwing grenades at the group of spectators and even at the refreshment stand.

The Israeli representative claimed that the Lebanese civilians who were killed by his country's shells were human shields. This is false. It is a totally unfounded claim not governed by facts or reality. We would have wanted to believe the Israeli representative that the hundreds who were killed had taken refuge in one of the Lebanese Government buildings or in any other building. But instead they were killed inside a United Nations headquarters building that is supposedly protected by international law. However, Israel, which failed to respect any of the relevant United Nations resolutions, thought it could undertake a massive and collective killing campaign of those who decided to resort to the United Nations camp, this time

under the pretext that those who took refuge at the United Nations headquarters, which is basically in charge of protecting civilians and displaced persons, were human shields.

The question that arises is, since when have United Nations camps and headquarters become places of refuge for human shields? Is that a way of questioning the integrity and neutrality of United Nations staff members, or is it simply an attempt to use any pretext whatsoever when other pretexts no longer exist? What happened in Qana is the responsibility of Israel, the United Nations and the Security Council. I think what occurred is State-sponsored terrorism, on which the State of Israel was built, and I do not think we have sufficient time to cite the many pages and examples to prove our point. Those who doubt us could go and read a book entitled *By Way of Deception*, a book written by a former Israeli spy.

What is really strange here is that the representative of Israel uses the words terrorists and terrorism, while his country was based on the principle of terrorism, on the carnage of Deir Yassin, on blowing up the King David Hotel. These are good examples of Israeli terrorism. The assassination of many people in Beirut during the Israeli invasion of Beirut and the carnage of Sabra and Shatila are other examples. I wonder, are all these people who were killed human shields as well? It is really astonishing for the Israeli representative to talk about terrorism, while failing to mention that his Government officially acknowledged burying some Egyptian and Sudanese prisoners alive. It is also strange that the United Nations and the Security Council do not heed such events and do not try to determine the exact circumstances surrounding them and to point out Israel's responsibility.

However, the issue apparently is that we at the United Nations have double standards. Claiming that attacks by civilian Lebanese people are violations of resolutions is totally unfounded. Many honest observers, including the United Nations observers, fully agree that such nationalist acts are sanctioned by principles that allow people to defend their country and to evict the occupier.

If Israel wants to enjoy stability, it would have to withdraw completely from Lebanon to the internationally recognized borders. Has this happened yet? Has this happened so that we can accept Israel's claim that it has already withdrawn from Lebanon? No. We do not believe that Israel has actually withdrawn from Lebanon. We can believe this only when the United Nations and the Security Council assure us that Israel has actually withdrawn to the internationally recognized borders.

In our view, Israel should be committed to pay reparations for the Qana event, and for that reason we voted in favour of this draft resolution. We wish to underscore Lebanon's right in that regard.

Mr. Zahid (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): I wish to begin by saying that I greatly regret having to take the floor following the statement made by the representative of Algeria because I wished to provide a number of clarifications and respond to some of the things said.

The so-called Western Sahara is an integral part of Moroccan territory. The colonization of this region came to an end with the departure of the country that controlled this territory, and that was Spain. As I said earlier, Morocco recovered that territory following the Madrid Agreement and the opinion of the International Court of Justice, which unequivocally established the links of sovereignty — the Arab allegiance, which was the only link of sovereignty at the time — that existed between the Saharan territory and Morocco.

Secondly, Morocco is not a colonial Power, nor an occupier. Our Algerian brothers are in the best position to judge this because the Moroccan people and the Algerian people have struggled side by side for decades for the same cause. The Sahara question is a question of territorial integrity, not a colonization issue. For Morocco, which is convinced of the soundness of its rights, the referendum that Morocco itself initiated can only confirm that territorial integrity.

Thirdly, the Settlement Plan is the product of the good offices of the former Secretary-General, Mr. Péréz de Cuéllar, who authorized it under the provisions of the Charter, rather than under any decolonization resolution.

Fourthly, the implementation of the Settlement Plan has certainly experienced progress, *inter alia*, the ceasefire, but it has also experienced enormous difficulties. As the representative of the United States explained so well in the Security Council, we are not going to resolve these difficulties by overlooking them.

Of course, the identification has been completed, and the pre-registration of the refugees in the Tindouf camp in Algeria is almost complete. However, we must not forget that it is public knowledge that the Saharans of Tindouf have not been able to freely express their choice in terms of the venue of repatriation. Therefore, it is under that pressure that the Saharans were constrained, for the most part, to declare that they wished to return to the east of the sand-wall, which is a no-man's land, a completely desolate, desert, uninhabited area. Morocco solemnly and officially stated that it can in no way, under any circumstances, accept the displacement of the Tindouf refugees to that location, where conditions for a normal life do not exist.

With respect to identification, everyone, including the United Nations, knows that throughout the process Morocco has rejected the illegal and irregular veto exercised by the other party, on the instructions of their intelligence, of course, against our applicants. We have submitted to the Secretary-General evidence to that effect. By way of example I can cite that there were people who even rejected their own family members. This evidence was communicated to the Secretary-General and United Nations officials. Finally, there were those on the other side, with Polisario, who regained the motherland and who brought evidence of this matter which was published by the national press, which led to the accumulation of some 140,000 appeals.

Regarding our position on the implementation of the protocol and guidelines, Morocco has submitted to the United Nations its interpretation of the implementation of the protocol, which has been published in a document in February 2000, and the Secretary-General has held consultations with a view to arriving at a common interpretation. Unfortunately, the persistence of the other party and its demands to oppose the participation of thousands of Saharans in the referendum have not made it possible to reach an acceptable solution. As we know, Morocco cannot in any way accept a referendum in which all the Saharans, without exception, cannot participate.

We want to be optimistic like our Algerian brothers, and we hope that our brothers will help us resolve the various problems mentioned by the Secretary-General in his recent report to the Security Council. In its most recent relevant resolution, the Council requested that the parties present concrete solutions that could be acceptable to both parties regarding the various problems regarding the Plan's various implementation problems.

I also hope that our Algerian brothers will help us find adequate solutions, which will make it possible for us to conduct a fair and equitable referendum which would not exclude any Saharan from participating in the vote. That is our fervent hope, and we hope our Algerian brothers will help us achieve that lofty objective that was solemnly adopted by the Saharan tribal leaders — and when I refer to the Saharan leaders, I am referring to the leaders of the two parties — at their first meeting in Geneva in 1990, and that was well before the Settlement Plan itself.

Mr. Bouhedda (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): My delegation will be brief. We wish to take the floor following the statement made by the representative of Morocco.

My delegation spoke earlier to recall Algeria's attachment to the Settlement Plan for the Western Sahara and to reiterate its position to encourage the international community, the Secretary-General and his Personal Representative, Mr. Baker, to continue their efforts to implement the Settlement Plan of the Western Saharan conflict and with a view to enabling the Saharan people to express themselves freely regarding their destiny.

Algeria still abides with the peace Settlement Plan approved by both parties to the conflict, the Frente POLISARIO and Morocco, and endorsed by the Security Council. Algeria is still determined to assist the two parties in finding solutions to the difficulties that have hampered the implementation process of the peace plan in Western Sahara.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.